

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only  
received NOV 8 1982  
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic N/A

and/or common Boston Post Road Historic District

2. Location

567-728 Boston Post Rd, 1-25 Brookside Rd, 148-73 Old Kingshighway

street & number Parts of Boston Post Road, Brookside Road, Old Kingshighway North, N/A not for publication

city, town Darien N/A vicinity of congressional district 4th -

state Connecticut code 09 county Fairfield code 001

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name See continuation sheets.

street & number " "

city, town " N/A vicinity of state "

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Town Hall

street & number 719 Boston Post Road

city, town Darien state Connecticut

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title State Register of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_ yes  no

date 1982 \_\_\_ federal  state \_\_\_ county \_\_\_ local

depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission

city, town Hartford state Connecticut

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

### Over View

The Boston Post Road National Register Historic District in Darien, Connecticut, runs along a block and a half of the Post Road from the Town Hall on the west to the Congregational Church and houses associated with it on the east. Twelve 19th-century houses, the only remaining such group along the Post Road in Darien, occupy the central section of the district.

The district embraces approximately 26 structures on approximately 17 acres of land. Three structures are considered not to contribute to the historic character of the district.

The area of the Town of Darien that surrounds the district includes the main business street, the Connecticut Turnpike, a shopping plaza, modest houses and a number of large houses. The area is a mix typical of Fairfield County, on the fringe of the greater metropolitan New York City region, and within commuting distance of the city. In recent years new construction on the Boston Post Road in the vicinity of the district has included a convalescent home and an office building (Photograph 4).

### Interrelationship of the Buildings

The symbolic pivot of the Boston Post Road National Register Historic District is the red brick, Greek Revival style edifice of the First Congregational Church of Darien (successor to the Middlesex Ecclesiastical Society) at 14 Brookside Road (lot 12) (Photograph 9), constructed in 1837. The Doric columns of its tetastyle portico rise from a modern, flagstone stylobate to a pediment with tympanum of flush horizontal boards. The entablature and raking cornices are plain, without moldings. The central, double, panelled doors are flanked by similar single doors,

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** See #4      **Builder/Architect** See #4

## Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

### Criterion

The buildings in the Boston Post Road National Register Historic District illustrate architecturally the development of the community from the time of its settlement to the 20th century. Included in the district are good examples of the pre-Revolutionary War, Greek Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, 19th-century vernacular, Neo-Classical Revival, Georgian Revival, and 20th-century contemporary styles. The district is an architectural statement of the history of Darien that is well worth preserving. (Criterion C.)

### History of Church and School

The movement for a separate ecclesiastical society in western Stamford in the 1730s was vigorously opposed by Stamford's First Ecclesiastical Society for several years, but in due course the insurgents prevailed, and the Middlesex Ecclesiastical Society was authorized in October 1737. Why this section of Stamford was called Middlesex is not known, and, similarly, why the name Darien was adopted when the separate town was incorporated in 1820 is not known.<sup>1</sup> The first meeting house,<sup>2</sup> built on the present site in 1740, is shown by a barber sketch (1835)<sup>3</sup> to have been a 2½-story frame structure with its gable roof perpendicular to the street. Its three-bay facade had a central doorway under an open belfry that was capped by a short steeple and a tall weathervane.

The Middlesex Society School was built on the triangular land immediately south of the church (see map), and in due course the post office was established across the street, to the west of the church. In many New England communities, public buildings such as the church, school and post office often were located around a central, open space, but there is no indication that Darien ever had a village green such as is typically found elsewhere.

Establishment of the Ecclesiastical Society pre-dated the Boston Post Road, put through after 1800. Old Kings Highway North is probably the oldest street in the district, and was long known simply as County Road. Brookside

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 17 prox.

Quadrangle name Norwalk South

Quadrangle scale 1 : 24000

UMT References See continuation sheet.

A 

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 Zone Easting Northing

B 

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 Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary of the Boston Post Road National Register Historic District nomination is shown as the dotted line on the accompanying map drawn at a scale of approximately 200 feet to the inch.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title David F. Ransom, Consultant, edited by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator

organization Connecticut Historical Commission date February 20, 1980

street & number 59 South Prospect Street telephone 203 566-3005

city or town Hartford state Connecticut

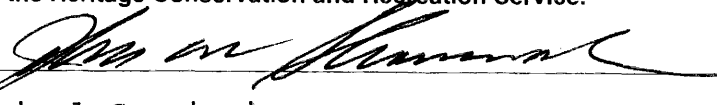
# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

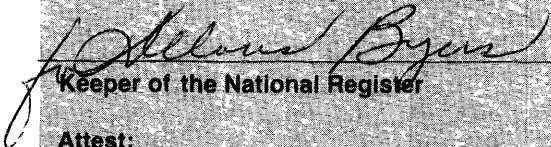


title Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

date October 25, 1982

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register



Keeper of the National Register

entered in the National Register

date 12/16/82

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Mailing addresses of property owners are the same as the properties unless an additional address is given. All addresses are Darien, CT 06820 unless otherwise noted.

Most dates of construction and many historical details were provided by Frances Landon and Nancy Di Joseph who have done extensive research in the Darien Land Records.

All properties are considered to contribute to the historic character of the district except those designated NC before the description.

<u>Location and Owner</u>	<u>Date and Description</u>
Lot 35 567 Boston Post Road Samuel Grasso Co. 551 Boston Post Road	c. 1815. 2½-story, 3-bay, Greek Revival house. Entrance has side and transom lights under a molded cornice with dentil course.  Built by the second minister of the church, Rev. William Fisher.
Lot 34 581 Boston Post Road James and Emily Whittaker	1859. 2½-story, Italianate house with flat roof and cupola, tall first-floor windows and side porch with columns. Front door has side and transom lights within molded surround.  Built by the church as the first church-owned parsonage. Served as the parsonage until 1923 when 18 Brookside Road was built to replace it.
Lot 33 599 Boston Post Road New Darien Convalescent Center, Inc.	NC c. 1970s. Large, oblong brick convalescent home.
Lot 96 - two structures 666 Boston Post Road 668 Boston Post Road Dorothy C. Kelsey 102 25th Street Belleair Beach, FL 33353	NC c. 1926. 2-story, gable-roofed, frame structure with central doorway flanked by picture windows. Flush vertical wood siding on the facades, clapboards on the sides. Converted from carpenter's shop and moved from rear of lot.  1920. 2½-story, frame, gable-roofed, central entrance house with aluminum clapboard siding. Wide front porch has central, peaked dormer.

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Lot 97  
676 Boston Post Road  
Jack E. Wood  
21 Nearwater Lane.

c. 1880. One of a row of three originally identical 2½-story, T-shaped, gable-roofed clapboard, Queen Anne houses on stone foundations. Entrance is in one of the angles of the T. The projecting section (stem of the T) has a 1-story, rectangular bay with paired 2-over-2 windows. The three gables are covered with wood shingles that have convex-shaped corners. The attic windows in the gables are formed of four panes, 2-over-2, with the upper pair shaped as a gablet. Other windows in the house are 4-over 4. The angles of the T are filled in with additions. Barn in the rear. (Photograph 1).

Lot 63 - two structures  
679 Boston Post Road  
685 Boston Post Road  
Jane Low Jackson  
679 Boston Post Road

c. 1895. 2½-story, gable-roofed, frame house on stone foundations with front porch. Shingled second floor flares over clapboard first floor. First floor facade has door and large 2-over-2 window; second floor has three 1-over-1 windows.

c. 1895. 2½-story, gable roofed, 3-bay, clapboard house on cobblestone foundations with fish scale shingles in the gable. A 1-story porch on the west. (Photograph 2).

Lot 98  
682 Boston Post Road  
Yolanda Fitzgerald

c. 1890. Second of row of three; see 676 Boston Post Road. Asbestos siding has been added. (Photograph 1.)

Lot 99  
688 Boston Post Road  
Thomas Golden Realty Co.  
Box 3411

c. 1890. Third of row of three; see 676 Boston Post Road. Added, wide front porch that fills out the angles of the T served as a tea room in the 1920s. (Photograph 1).

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Lot 62 - 3 structures  
693 Boston Post Road  
Jane Lowe Jackson and  
Roger Fawcett  
Stamford, CT

1903. 2½-story, 3-bay, gable roofed, weathered shingle house on stone foundations. Windows are 2-over-2. Porch extends across the front, and there is a 1-story ell to the rear. The first principal of the 1910 Centre School lived here. (Photograph 3).

1920. 1-story, wood shingled bungalow.

1920. Duplicate 1-story, wood shingled bungalow.

Lot 100  
694 Boston Post Road  
Thomas E. Golden Jr.  
Box 3411

c. 1830. 1½-story, gable-roofed, saltbox with clapboard siding and central doorway on stone foundations. Altered and enlarged. Two front dormers break through the eaves under gables, over an added front porch. There is a wide shed dormer on the rear. Originally, this house probably was a simple, 3-bay rectangle with gable roof.

Lot 61  
701 Boston Post Road  
Town of Darien  
Town Hall  
719 Boston Post Road

c. 1840. Small, 1½-story, 3-bay, clapboard central entrance, gable-roofed house on stone foundations. 1st floor windows are 2-over-1 with blinds; 2nd floor windows are 3 panes arranged horizontally, under the eaves which are half way between the ridge pole and the first floor level. There is a small central chimney. 1-story wings with shed roofs of different pitches have been added to left and right, each with a 6-over-6 window. The added porch across the front has one of its 4 turned posts left, and has fish scale shingles in the triangular sections under the roof. There is an ell to the rear with a chimney in its rear wall. (Photograph 3).

Lot 60  
707 Boston Post Road  
Town of Darien  
Town Hall  
719 Boston Post Road

Empty lot.

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Lot 101  
714 Boston Post Road  
Russell G. Sanford

NC c. 1905. 2½-story, ell-shaped, gable-roofed house on stone foundations with asbestos siding. The 1st floor of the 3-bay front section has been obscured by the addition of a bold concrete storefront. (Photograph 4).

Lot 59  
719 Boston Post Road  
Town of Darien  
Town Hall

1910. 2½-story, hipped-roof, Neo-Classical Revival, brick block, built as a school and converted to use as the Town Hall in 1949. The central entrance has been blocked up and a main doorway created on the west side. At 1st-floor level two pairs of 2-over-2 windows flank the central entrance, while at the 2nd floor there are five pairs of windows. The brownstone lintels and sills of the windows are connected by a set-back in the brick to form semi-string courses (Photograph 5). There are recessed panels between the 1st- and 2nd-story windows.

The projecting cornice is supported by modillion blocks over a brick dentil course. There are two hipped-roof dormers in the front slope of the hipped roof. Each dormer has three windows; the upper sash have a central diamond-shaped pane with the four corner panes the shape of an irregular polygon. The dormers have slate shingle sides. (Photograph 6).

A 2-story, 1917 addition to the rear is devoted primarily to an auditorium.

Lot 103  
728 Boston Post Road  
Edith G. Sanford

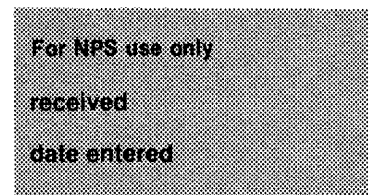
c. 1835. 1½-story, gable-roofed, central entrance, 3-bay, clapboard cottage on stone foundations. Windows are 6-over-6. A wide front porch and wings to the side and rear have been added. Originally, this house probably was a simple, 3-bay rectangle with gable roof.



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Lot 90  
1 Brookside Road  
Joseph Lupinacci et al  
c/o Colonial Land Co.  
90 Brookdale Dr.  
Stamford, CT

c. 1885. 2½-story, gable-roofed, clapboard house on stone foundations, with screened wrap-around front porch. Gable-roofed, 2-car garage in rear.

Lot 91  
5 Brookside Road  
Joseph Lupinacci et al  
c/o Colonial Land Co.  
90 Brookdale Dr.  
Stamford, CT

c. 1835. 1-story, gable-roofed, central entrance, clapboard cottage on stone foundations with central chimney and second chimney in the north wall. The flanking windows are 6-over-6. The small, gable-roofed portico has a front gable end of openwork, parallel, diagonal sticks in an inverted chevron pattern. The site slopes down toward the back, and the basement is at grade at the rear. Said originally to have been a cobbler's shop. (Photograph 7).

Lot 92  
11 Brookside Road  
First Congregational  
Church Society of  
Darien  
14 Brookside Road

c. 1888. 2½-story, T-shaped, gable-roofed, Queen Anne house with clapboard and wood shingle siding. The vertical ends of the roofs of the flanking porches have raised moldings that form diamond shapes. The upper sash of the paired attic windows in the gable ends have a central pane surrounded by a border of small panes. (Photograph 8).

This T-shaped house resembles the three T-shaped houses at 676, 682, and 688 Boston Post Road, but is larger. It does have, on the facade of the protecting front section, a rectangular 1-story bay with two 2-over-2 windows, like the others, with horizontal panels below. The four houses were built by Joseph Hindley.

Lots 12 and 13  
14 Brookside Road  
First Congregational  
Church Society of  
Darien

1837. Brick Greek Revival church with gable roof and Roman Doric tetrastyle portico. A square tower rises from the roof with its front wall flush with the facade of the main structure. Central, double front doors,

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each with 4 horizontal panels, are flanked by similar single doors, under three 12-over-12 windows. Above the plain entablature the pediment is formed of flush horizontal boards. The cornice and raking cornices are not molded. (Photograph 9).

Each side has five 12-over-12 windows with brownstone lintels and sills, on stone foundations. The 5th bay was added when the church was enlarged in 1860. The walls are laid up in common bond with grey mortar.

A 1-story 1928 addition to the rear built of red brick with red mortar has a large bow of five 12-over-12 windows. The central section of this addition has a gable roof, with a fan window in the gable end, flanked by sections of flat roofs. The general effect is "colonial".

A further 1959 1-story addition to the rear, attached by a glass tunnel, has a flat roof and solid brick walls in a contemporary mode. The materials of red brick with white trim, the mass, and the scale of this addition are sensitive and compatible to the earlier portions of the complex. (Photograph 11).

Lots 93, 94, 95  
Brookside Road  
First Congregational  
Church Society of  
Darien  
14 Brookside Road

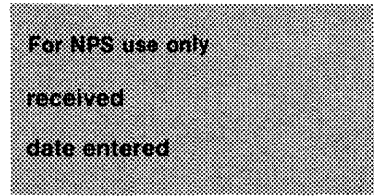
Parking lot.

Lot 12  
18 Brookside Road  
First Congregational  
Church Society of  
Darien  
14 Brookside Road

1923. 2½-story, Georgian Revival, gable-roofed, central entrance, 5-bay, clapboard house. The gabled entrance portico has a coved ceiling. At both ends there are fanlights in the gables, over projecting porches.

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Lot 66  
25 Brookside Road  
Anita S. Brunner

c. 1770. Sylvanus Weed, Jr., House. 2½-story, gable-roofed, central entrance, central chimney, Colonial house with wood shingle siding. The windows are 12-over-8. There is a 4-light transom over the front door. The entrance has a flat surround and the windows have simple, plank caps. A later 2-story wing has been added at the southwest corner. (Photograph 12).

The house originally was located closer to the Boston Post Road, and has been moved back to its present location.

Lot 43  
45 Old Kings Highway North  
Historical Society of  
Darien

c. 1736. 2½-story, 5-bay, central stone chimney, central entrance, clapboard house. The doorway has five transom lights, and a molded architrave surround. Windows are 9-over-6. The house was moved from across the street when it was acquired by the Historical Society in 1966. At that time it was restored, and a substantial, gambrel-roofed, rear wing was added. (Photograph 13).

Lot 42  
49 Old Kings Highway North  
Y.W.C.A. of Darien

c. 1920. 2½-story, gable-roofed, central entrance, Colonial Revival style house with wood shingles siding and end chimneys. The flat roof of the square portico is supported by fluted Ionic columns. (Photograph 13).

Lot 14  
70 Old Kings Highway North  
Katherine Pallesen

c. 1730. 2½-story, gable-roofed, central entrance house, much altered. Siding is wood shingles. The central, small brick chimney is not original. The Greek Revival style doorway and portico may have been added c. 1835. A 2-story addition on the northeast end includes a recessed screened-in porch with Doric columns. There is an unusually old and large red oak tree in the front yard, and a carriage house, much altered, in the back yard.

Was owned by a minister of the church before 1859.

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while above the three doors there are three 12-over-12 windows. The brick is laid up in common bond with grey mortar. Each side wall has five 12-over-12 windows; the fifth bay was added when the church was enlarged in 1860. There is a short, square wood tower whose front wall is in the same plane as the facade of the building. Each corner of the tower has a spirelet.

The interior of the church, relatively plain, is dominated by the galleries on three sides. The front wall is given over to gold-colored organ pipes. (Photograph 10).

Twentieth-century construction activity has included two large additions to the church. The first, c. 1925, abutting the earlier structure, is one story high, built of red brick with red mortar and with white wood trim in a "colonial" effect dominated by a large bow of five 12-over-12 windows on the east elevation. The second large addition, built after mid-century, is a separate structure connected by a glass corridor to the first addition. While the materials of the second addition are red brick and white trim, the flat roof, solid brick walls and glass entrance are in a contemporary mode executed in scale and mass sensitive to the rest of the complex. (Photograph 11).

The Town Hall at 719 Boston Post Road (lot 59) was built in 1910 as a school. (Photograph 6). The dominating feature of this 2½-story, Neo-Classical Revival, brick block is its roof. The roof is hipped, with oblong chimneys, dormers, and a heavy eaves cornice. The hipped roof dormers have slate shingle sides, and three windows on the front. The upper sash of the windows have a central diamond-shaped pane surrounded by four polygonal-shaped corner panes. The projecting, molded cornice is supported by modillion blocks over a brick dentil course. The facade has five bays of paired 2-over-2 windows. The central bay of the first floor, formerly the main entrance, has been filled in, and the main entrance is now on the west elevation. The effect of a series of string courses in the walls is created by recessing the brick by the depth of one brick at the window lintels and sills of the first and second floors. Recessed panels between the first and second floor windows and between the basement and first floor windows are an additional refinement. A plain, 1917 brick addition on the rear is given over primarily to an auditorium.

The houses along both sides of the Boston Post Road between the Town Hall, or school, and the church, and on the west side of Brookside Road across the street from the church, are modest frame structures, all with gable roofs. Perhaps the four oldest, and smallest, are 694, 701 and 728 Boston Post Road (lots 100, 61 and 103) (Photographs 4 and 3) and 5 Brookside Road (lot 91) (Photograph 7). Now altered, all originally were rectangular, 1½-story three-bay clapboard houses on stone foundations with the roof ridge parallel with the street.

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A second design type amongst this group of houses is the T-shaped plan of which three examples, originally identical, exist at 676, 682, and 688 Boston Post Road (lots 97, 98 and 99) (Photograph 1). These are 2½-story, clapboard houses on stone foundations with entrance in one of the angles of the T. Windows are 4-over-4 double-hung sash with the exception of those in the first-floor bay, and in the attic. The one-story, rectangular bay on the front of the stem of the T, which projects toward the street, has paired 2-over-2 windows. The attic gables, that are covered by wood shingles with convex-shaped corners, have four-pane windows, the upper pair shaped like gablets. A larger and more elaborate version of the same T-shaped plan is seen at 11 Brookside Road, (Photograph 8). In addition to the basic plan, the decorative detail of the rectangular, one-story bay with paired 2-over-2 windows is repeated there, with similar horizontal panels below the bay windows. Raised moldings forming a diamond pattern in the ends of the flanking porch roofs are also found in the row of three smaller houses, while in the larger house the shingled gable ends have attic windows of a central, large pane surrounded by a border of small lights.

A third design that is represented by more than one structure is shown by the pair of houses at 679 and 685 Boston Post Road, (lot 63). They are small, combination clapboard-and-shingle, 2½-story houses with the roof ridge perpendicular to the street. (Photograph 2). The facade of the first has a door and a large 2-over-2 window at first floor with three 1-over-1 windows at the second floor, and a shingled second floor that flares over the clapboard first floor. The second is a three-bay clapboard house with the picturesque attributes of fish scale shingles in the gables and cobblestone foundations.

Three older houses constitute a fourth design group. Two of them are located on Old Kings Highway North. The Bates-Scofield House (Historical Society of Darien), 45 Old Kings Highway North, (lot 43) dating from 1736, is a five-bay, 2½-story, clapboard saltbox with central stone chimney and central doorway on stone foundations. The windows are 9-over-6. A two-story, gambrel-roofed ell to the rear was added after the house was moved to its present location in 1966. (Photograph 14).

The Joshua Morehouse House, 70 Old Kings Highway North (lot 14) c. 1730 is a 2½-story, gable-roofed, central entrance house with small central brick chimney and clapboard siding. During the course of alterations about 1835 the house received a Greek Revival style portico, doorway, and eaves cornice. A porch with Doric columns on the north has a screened-in porch above, and there is a screened-in porch on the south.

The third house in this group of older structures, not on Old Kings Highway North, is the Sylvanus Weed, Jr., House, 25 Brookside Road (lot 66) c. 1770, another five-bay, 2½-story, gable-roofed Colonial with central

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doorway and central chimney. The windows are 12-over-8, and the siding is wood shingles, painted white. This house also has a two-story addition, at the southwest corner. (Photograph 12).

Other structures, one of a kind, that fill out the balance of the district, are several 20th-century houses, including the church parsonage at 18 Brookside Road (lot 12) and the Y.W.C.A., at 49 Old Kings Highway North, (lot 42) (Photograph 14), and two vernacular late 19th-century/early 20th-century houses at 693 Boston Post Road (lot 62) (Photograph 3), and 1 Brookside Road (lot 90). 714 Boston Post Road, (lot 101) (Photograph 4), a Queen Anne house with a large concrete store front is considered, because of the insensitive addition, not to contribute to the historic character of the district.

Boundary Justification

The boundary of the Boston Post Road National Register Historic District is drawn to encompass the existing houses of the original community, the church and the school (now Town Hall) that descended from the Ecclesiastical Society, and the houses between the two institutional buildings.

Pursuant to this purpose, the reasoning for including or excluding certain properties is as follows:

Most of the houses on the southeast side of Old Kings Highway North have been excluded as they have no association with the church.

72 Old Kings Highway North (lot 9), a Georgian house, has been excluded because it is not on its original site, has no direct association with the church and has been substantially altered. Additional structures on this lot, facing the Boston Post Road, are modern commercial buildings.

567 and 581 Boston Post Road (lots 34 and 35) are included because ministers of the church lived there.

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Road, originally Gracious Street, is another old road; it adjoins and runs parallel with a brook named Goodwives River, earlier Pine Brook. Further name changes are indicated by an 1893 map<sup>4</sup> that shows Old Kings Highway North as the Old Boston Post Road, and the present Boston Post Road simply as Main Street.

In 1740 Dr. S. Moses Mather began a long term of service as pastor of the church that continued to 1806. At the time of the Revolutionary War he provided leadership for his congregation in support of the revolt, but there was no unanimity in the community as a substantial number of local citizens were Tories. Mather and four of his sons were abducted in 1779 by local Tories and held for a month before being released. In a more famous incident, on Sunday, July 22, 1781, forty local Tories took over the afternoon church service, tied up the males, led them out of the church two-by-two with Dr. Mather at their head, and also absconded with 40 horses. Twenty-five of the prisoners eventually reached the British Provost prison in New York City; 19 survived.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the Tory cause received strong support in the Middlesex parish up to the very end of the Revolutionary War.

In 1837 the society replaced its first meeting house with the present structure, which they modelled after the Old Wells Meeting House in nearby South Norwalk (demolished).<sup>6</sup> The architect and builder remain anonymous. A 600-pound bell was installed in 1841. In 1903, in line with the trend to merge ecclesiastical societies and congregations, use of the term Middlesex Ecclesiastical Society was discontinued, and the name First Congregational Church Society of Darien was adopted.

The term Middlesex had already been abandoned so far as the school was concerned in 1838, with a change of name to Darien School Society. In 1858 there is reference to a Centre School District. The 1832 school building was considered to be inadequate by 1878, and in that year was replaced. The 1832 structure was sold, and was moved to Railroad Avenue (now Tokeneke Road). The new school was built in 1878 on land that is now the parking lot behind the Town Hall. "It was a stately structure, with a belfry containing a bell,"<sup>7</sup> and in a contemporary picture is shown to have been in the Queen Anne style with bargeboards, and elaborate strut and a finial in the gable end facing the Post Road. The present structure was built in 1910 as a new Centre School,<sup>8</sup> and was converted to use as the Town Hall in 1949.<sup>9</sup>

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Discussion

Architectural significance of the Boston Post Road National Register Historic District does not derive from the excellence of the individual structures. Only the church and the school have pretensions of grandeur, and while competently designed, they are representative of common practice followed at their respective times of construction. The Greek Revival style church has excellent proportions and an impressive portico but the portico is without elaborate moldings and the tower is without a steeple. The Neo-Classical Revival style school is also well proportioned, has perhaps outstanding roof treatment, and the brickwork of the facade is elaborate. But it was a fairly standard design for its time. Many such schools were built after the turn of the century, and many have been demolished.<sup>10</sup>

The architectural contribution of the church and school to the district is far outweighed by their function as anchors, east and west, for a group of structures that as a whole give insight into a historic way of life in Darien that is far different from its usual image as a residential community for New York City commuters. A great deal of Darien's 18th- and 19th-century history is tied up in the church and school and surrounding buildings. This effective sense of a former time and place now surrounded by metropolitan and commuter living is the great contribution of the district.

Unfortunately, little is known about the origin and purpose of the modest 19th-century frame houses. The small, rectangular, three-bay houses probably go back to the 1830s, but there is little information on community conditions at that time. There is reference to a hat manufacturing shop near the corner of Brookside Road and the Boston Post Road, (where the gasoline station is now).<sup>11</sup> The creek was used to soak the felts. As the next town east is Norwalk, long famous for hat manufacturing, it is easy to think that some of the activity may have spilled over to nearby Darien. Also, there is a local oral tradition that the small, three-bay house at 4 Brookside Road (lot 91) was a shoemaker's shop and that shoes were made in the basement of 25 Brookside Road (lot 66). Such modest enterprises are conceptually consistent with the modest architecture.

More information is known about the four T-shaped houses between the church and the school. The large house, 11 Brookside Road (lot 92) was built by Joseph Hindley in the 1880s. In 1888 he acquired the land behind this house that fronts on the Boston Post Road, and built the three identical houses, that are a smaller version of his own, at 676, 682 and 688 Boston Post Road (lots 97, 98 and 99). He rented them for several years before selling them about 1900.

The three older houses provide an important connection with the 18th century, but again are primarily notable for their associations and for



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the fact that they have survived, rather than for their architectural integrity. The Bates-Scofield Homestead (the Historical Society, lot 43), where the first business meetings of the Middlesex Ecclesiastical Society were held in 1739, is a highly competent restoration, but the house is not on its original site, and does have an extensive wing that was added in recent years. The Joshua Morehouse House, 70 Old Kings Highway North (lot 14), and the Sylvanus Weed, Jr., House, 25 Brookside Road (lot 66), have significant additions and alterations. Their importance lies in linking the district with the 18th century; they add substantially to the architectural historic record.

1.  
Hughes, p. 107. The Register and Manual, 1981, State of Connecticut, page 599, states that the town was named from the Isthmus of Darien. Hughes considers this possibility to be one of several.
2.  
Reproduced in Darien Historic Sketches, p. 7.
3.  
In the 1920s plans were drawn for a structure somewhat similar in appearance to serve as a parish house (see The Church with a History, frontispiece) but were not executed. The architect was Hobart Upjohn, son of Richard M. Upjohn, who designed the Connecticut State Capitol.
4.  
Atlas of the State of Connecticut, p. 124.
5.  
Hurd, p. 268.
6.  
The Church with a History, p. 30.
7.  
Corbins, p. 45.
8.  
The name was changed in 1921 to Royle School in honor of Edwin Milton Royle, a playwright and actor, who lived in Darien 1909-1920. See Corbins, p. 61.
9.  
In 1878 the land was purchased from the heirs of Eleanor Shay, (Darien Land Records, volume 8, page 891 and 8/894) who had lived at 701 Boston Post Road. For the 1910 building program see Town Meeting Minutes, v. 4, p. 130; for the 1917 program v. 5, p. 49.
10.  
Schools of this description are standing, two in each community, in Torrington and Mystic, Connecticut.
11.  
Case, p. 8

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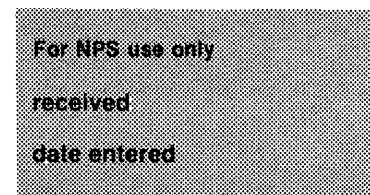
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- A 18/628990/4548900
- B 18/628910/4548780
- C 18/628940/4548730
- D 18/628980/4548760
- E 18/629000/4548740
- F 18/628960/4548620
- G 18/629040/4548600
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- T 18/628780/4548700
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- V 18/628820/4548770
- W 18/628810/4548820
- ~~X~~ 18/628860/4548840
- Y 18/628850/4548860
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- AA18/628940/4548920

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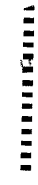

District boundary: 

Photo Key: 

Style or period:

- |   |                   |   |               |   |               |
|---|-------------------|---|---------------|---|---------------|
| A | Pre-Revolutionary | E | Queen Anne    | I | Colonial Rev. |
| B | Greek Revival     | F | Bungalow      | J | Georgian Rev. |
| C | Vernacular, 19 C  | G | Neo-Classical | K | Modern arch.  |
| D | Italianate        | H | Vern., 20 C   | L | Not 50 yrs.   |

Contributing 

Non contributing 